(b) the type of passengers for whom the upgradation facility is available and whether recommendation of Member of Parliament or any other officer is required for this;

(c) the officers entitled for class upgradation;

(d) whether they take decision on their own discretion or there is any criterion for this; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) to (e) Class upgradation in domestic flights is a commercial matter of airlines. Government does not regulate commercial matters of the airlines.

Fuel expenditure and operation cost of flights

†731. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been huge fall in consumer sale price of aviation turbine fuel used in aviation sector from August 2008 to January 2009;

(b) if so, the percentage of such reduction;

(c) whether it is also a fact that the fuel expenditure contributes more than 50 per cent in the operational cost of flights;

(d) if not, the details thereof; and

(e) the reasons for not passing the benefit being earned due to reduction in operational cost to general passenger yet?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir. There has been a fall in the prices of Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) used in aviation sector from August 2008 to January 2009.

(b) There is a reduction of about 55% in the price of fuel from August 2008 to January 2009.

(c) and (d) The percentage of cost attributable to ATF would be different for different airlines based on their business model. As per industry estimates, ATF accounted for 45 to 50% of the operative cost of Indian Carriers when ATF price was at its peak.

(e) Domestic Airlines have reduced the fuel surcharge in the range of Rs.200/- to 400/-. Further,, JetLite, Spicejet, Go Air and IndiGo have abolished the congestion charge.

Catering facility at airports

†732. SHRI PRABHAT JHA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(a) whether Government is aware that there is no proper arrangement of catering facility and cleanliness at several airports;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether it is a fact that the prices of eatables and beverages sold at airports are much higher than that of such items sold at Railway stations and at other places;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the steps being taken by Government for selling the food and drinking items at reasonable rates at the aerodromes so that people from every class of society can afford them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) and (b) Proper arrangement of catering facilities in hygienic condition are made at all the operational airports by way of Restaurant, Snack Bars, Tea/ Coffee/ Cold Drink Vending machines. The airports are maintained in neat and clean conditions through regular employees / maintenance contracts. The periodical customer satisfaction surveys have been carried out to maintain proper standards.

(c) to (e) Airports Authority of India (AAI) has been ensuring providing reasonably priced food and drinking items at Snack Bars and Kiosks to all categories of users at all airports. The price of the food items at all outlets have been approved by AAI and subsequently monitored.

Blending in Jet fuel

733. SHRI VIJAY JAWAHARLAL DARDA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that Air New Zealand has successfully completed a two-hour flight of passenger jet powered in part by vegetable oil;

(b) if so, whether such technology would be imported or indigenously developed;

(c) whether initially one engine of the aeroplane can powered by a 50-50 blend of oil from jatropha plants and standard jet fuel; and

(d) whether the factor of environment sustainability would also be taken in account while evaluating the viability of such a fuel?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) A report on the matter come to the notice through media. However, no authentic report has been received from International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) or International Air Travellers Association (IATA).

(b) to (d) No such proposal is under consideration with the Ministry.

Air services from Gwalior

†734.SHRI PRABHAT JHA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that adequate air services are not available in Madhya Pradesh which is an important State from tourism and historical point of view;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.